

**This Week in Congress**

*December 1, 2008*

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you and your family had a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday. Though our country has been experiencing difficult times, we are reminded how much we have to be thankful for. We are especially grateful to our soldiers who are away from their families this holiday season serving our country. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with all who serve.

I will continue to do my best to serve you in the coming months. Congress may reconvene on December 8, 2008, to consider an automaker's bailout plan. I am very thankful for the opportunity to serve you in our nation's capital. Please let me know how I can do my job better. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

### **Mourning the Lives Lost in Terrorist Attacks in Mumbai**

This week, our nation and countries around the world watched in horror as a terrorist attack in Mumbai, India, claimed the lives of almost 200 people, including six Americans. It was a senseless act by at least ten gunmen in a three-day assault.

The United States is standing firmly behind the people of India to support their recovery and to demonstrate to our enemies that democracy will not be broken. I extend my deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in these attacks.

### **Attending High School State Football Championship Game in Hays**

On Saturday, I attended the Class 2-1A state championship game at Lewis Field Stadium on the campus of Fort Hays State University in Hays. This year, the championship game was played between Smith Center and Olpe high schools. Congratulations to these two teams for playing a good game with great sportsmanship. Thanks to both schools for allowing me to participate in the coin toss. I also congratulate Smith Center for winning their fifth consecutive state championship following Saturday's final score of 48-19.

### **Learning about Health Insurance at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas**

One of my goals is to make sure all Kansans have access to quality health care. This week, I met with the management of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) in Topeka to learn more about providing health care coverage to Kansans. Blue Cross is the largest health insurer in the state and serves 103 of Kansas' 105 counties. Headquartered in Topeka, the mutual insurance company also has offices in Dodge City, Garden City, Hays, Hutchinson, Salina, Independence, Lawrence, Manhattan, Pittsburg and Wichita.

In addition to speaking with executives about providing Kansans with more affordable health insurance, I was able to tour several sites to gain a better understanding of how Blue Cross operates. During my visit, I learned about the customer service operations at Blue Cross, its efforts to keep its policyholders informed through its large mail distribution center and wellness initiatives for its employees.

Thanks to President and Chief Executive Officer Andrew Corbin, Vice-President of Communications and Public Relations Graham Bailey, Vice-President of Provider Relations and Medical Affairs Fred Palenske, Director of Government Relations Sunee Mickle, Manager of Corporate Communications Mary Beth Chambers, Director of Computer Services Marvin Boleski, Director of Information Systems Scott Vondemkamp, Administrator of Corporate Health Services Terri Janda, Director of the Customer Service Center Jeanie Schuler, Director of BCBSKS Claims Ron Shelton and Stephanie Imthurn with Corporate Interior Design and Purchasing for meeting with me.

### **Touring Cerner Corporation in Kansas City**

On Monday, I toured the Cerner Corporation in Kansas City. Cerner Corporation provides health care information to other health care providers through a technological system. During my visit, I learned that Cerner serves more than 6,000 clients all over the world. For more than 20 years, Cerner has introduced a systematic information sharing system that meets the needs for most health care challenges. Cerner makes it easier to distribute and share health care information to providers which is vital for proactive health care. Thank you to Maggie Nelson and Amanda Atkins for the tour.

### **Meeting with Lions Club Members in Topeka**

I joined members of the Topeka Lions Club on Monday for their weekly meeting. Citizen involvement in civic clubs, such as the Lions Club, helps keep our communities in Kansas strong. As a member of the Hays Lions Club I always enjoy visiting other clubs in our state to learn about issues important to that community. Thanks to President Spencer Smith for his hospitality.

**Remembering the Life of Former State Senator Lillian Papay**

Recently, Kansas was unfortunate to lose former State Senator Lillian Papay. She began public service later in her life, but believed in the value of hard work. After serving as a state senator for one term, she became the first and only female mayor of Great Bend. I knew Senator Papay for many years and considered her a great friend. Robba and I extend our deepest sympathies to Senator Papay's children and extended family.

Very truly yours,

Jerry